



Thursday, February 15, 2007

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Item(s) from Council
RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION

ITEM No. 25

Subject: Approve a resolution requesting the State Legislature to appropriate \$200 million annually to the Texas Rail Relocation and Improvement Fund during the 80th Legislative Session and subsequent sessions of the Texas Legislature.

Sponsor: Council Member Jennifer Kim

Co-Sponsor1: Council Member Brewster McCracken **Co-Sponsor2:**

**Additional Backup
Material**

(click to open)

Resolution

For More Information: Robert Levinski, 974-2255

RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, freight and passenger mobility is critical to the economic prosperity and quality of life in the state of Texas and the Austin-San Antonio Corridor (Corridor), and

WHEREAS, population growth and increased international trade have combined to create both freight movement and passenger vehicle congestion throughout the state of Texas and the Corridor, and

WHEREAS, the state's population has grown by 57 percent and the total passenger miles driven rose by 95 percent over the past 25 years, but highway lane miles increased by just eight percent over the same period, and

WHEREAS, the Corridor's population has doubled over the last 20 years and is expected to double again over the next 20 years, and

WHEREAS, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between the United States and Mexico has grown to approximately \$800 billion annually and represents thousands of jobs in Texas and the Corridor, and

WHEREAS, Interstate 35 has become the *de facto* NAFTA highway between the United States, Mexico, and Canada, used by over one million trucks per year involved in international trade, and

WHEREAS, a study by the Federal Highway Administration in 1999 found that over the entire 1700-mile length of Interstate 35 from Mexico to Canada the highest vehicle counts, the most traffic fatalities, the worst congestion, the lowest levels of service, and the lowest average speed-per-mile were to be found in the Corridor, and

WHEREAS, a freight rail line owned by Union Pacific directly parallels Interstate 35 through the most congested portion of the Corridor and was constructed over 120 years ago and currently has nearly 200 at-grade crossings through the Corridor that represent congestion, public safety, and hazardous materials risks within heavily-populated areas of the Corridor, and

WHEREAS, freight rail car traffic through the Corridor has doubled since the passage of NAFTA, and

WHEREAS, the Texas Department of Transportation estimates that freight-movement trucking is increasing nationwide by two percent per year, increasing by six percent per year statewide, but increasing by 15 percent per year in the Corridor, and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of Texas has passed and the public has approved by election the constitutional amendment creating the Texas Rail Relocation and Improvement Fund, and

WHEREAS, \$200 million appropriated annually to the Texas Rail Relocation and Improvement Fund could be used to create a total bonded funding capacity for the Texas Rail Relocation and Improvement Fund of at least \$2 billion over the next decade, and

WHEREAS, the Texas Rail Relocation and Improvement Fund could be used throughout the State to relieve traffic congestion, improve freight movement mobility, remove hazardous materials from the heavily-populated areas of urban Texas, and thus improve the economy and quality of life in Texas; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

That the City of Austin respectfully requests that the State Legislature and the Governor of Texas appropriate \$200 million annually to the Texas Rail Relocation and Improvement Fund during the 80th Legislative Session and subsequent sessions of the Texas Legislature.

ADOPTED: , 2006

ATTEST: _____
Shirley A. Gentry
City Clerk